

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SCITECH TEAM

SUMMARY: NSF TEAM REACHED AGREEMENT WITH SAUDIS ON AD REFERENDUM MOU TO ESTABLISH SAUDI CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. DOCUMENTS THAT TEAM BROUGHT WITH THEM HOWEVER WERE NOT CLEARED WITH WASHINGTON OR EMBASSY, AND DID NOT PROCEED FROM UNDERSTANDINGS REACHED WITH SCITECH SURVEY TEAM LAST SPRING. LATEST NSF PROPOSALS EMPHASIZED BROAD AND AMBITIOUS PROGRAMS WHEREAS EMPHASIS OF EARLIER TEAM HAD BEEN TO BEGIN WITH LIMITED, ACHIEVABLE, VISIBLE PROJECTS. FINAL RESULTS WERE OK, BUT EMBASSY AND TREASURY REPS BELIEVE REVIEW IN WASHINGTON AND FIELD OF PROPOSALS BROUGHT OUT HERE FOR SIGNATURE DESERVES CONTINUING ATTENTION. END SUMMARY

1. RECENTLY CONCLUDED VISIT BY SEVEN MEMBER NSF TEAM HEADED BY DR. EGGERS CAN ONLY BE TERMED QUALIFIED SUCCESS. AGREEMENT WAS REACHED WITH SAUDIS ON AD REFERENDUM "MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SAUDI ARABIAN NATIONAL CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY" (SANCST), AS WELL AS AD REFERENDUM "MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND SAUDI ARABIA ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SANCST."

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2. IN MORE BROAD TERMS, HOWEVER, VISIT PRESENTED PROBLEMS. MOST SERIOUS WERE PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH DOCUMENTS BROUGHT BY TEAM FOR SIGNATURE. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THEY WERE NOT RPT NOT FULLY CLEARED IN WASHINGTON PRIOR TO TEAM'S DEPARTURE, NOR WERE THEY REVIEWED IN ADVANCE BY EMBASSY. IN ADDITION PROPOSAL CONTAINED IN DOCUMENTS WAS NOT WHAT WAS EXPECTED. OUR DEBRIEFING OF SCITECH SURVEY TEAM THIS SPRING LEFT IMPRESSION THAT TEAM WOULD RECOMMEND MODEST PROPOSAL INVOLVING SKELETAL ESTABLISHMENT, ON PAPER, OF NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTER, WITH PERHAPS FOUR TO SIX AMERICANS DURING FIRST YEAR, WORKING ON FLESHING OUT ORGANIZATION AS WELL AS UNDERTAKING LIMITED, CLEARLY ACHIEVABLE BUT VISIBLE PROJECTS.

3. PROPOSAL BROUGHT BY DR. EGGERS TEAM, HOWEVER, CALLED FOR RAPID CREATION AND EXPANSION OF A SAUDI ARABIAN

NATIONAL CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SANCST), WITH UP TO FIFTY PERSONS BY JULY 1976, TWENTY-TWO OF WHICH WOULD BE AMERICANS. THIS BROAD AND AMBITIOUS PROGRAM CONTAINED NO PROVISION FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF SHORT RUN PROGRAMS; IT PROVIDED NOTHING TANGIBLE TO WHICH MINFIN ABA AL-KHAYL COULD POINT AND SAY, "THIS IS WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO FAR IN SCIENCE FIELD." ALSO, DR EGGER'S INSISTENCE ON INCLUDING IN THE RECOMMENDATION THAT ONE OF THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES FOR SANCST BE THE FORMULATION OF NATIONAL SAUDI SCITECH POLICY MAY RUN SANCST HEAD-ON INTO SAUDI DOMESTIC BUREAUCRATIC SQUABBLES.

4. AFTER STUDYING REDRAFT OF PROPOSAL, AND UNFORTUNATELY AFTER MEETING HAD ALREADY BEGUN, EMBOFFS AND TREASURY REP WERE FORCED TO REQUEST DELAY OF MEETING IN ORDER TO CONFER WITH DR. EGGERS TO APPEAL HIS INSISTENCE ON REVERTING TO SUBSTANCE OF ORIGINAL PROPOSAL. MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY DR. EGGERS AND MEMBERS OF TEAM, TEMPORARY RESIDENT TREASURY REP, TREASURY REP ACCOMPANYING TEAM, EMBOFF ACCOMPANYING TEAM, AND EMBASSY REP IN RIYADH. DURING THIS MEETING TREASURY AND STATE REPS EMPHASIZED ALL POINTS MENTIONED IN ABOVE PARAGRAPH, PLUS OTHERS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EGGERS STILL PREFERRED TO PRESS FOR ORIGINAL PROPOSAL, ALTHOUGH SAID HE WOULD ACCEPT MODIFICATIONS FROM SAUDIS.

5. TREASURY AND STATE REPS THEN SOUGHT TO EMPHASIZE AD REFERENDUM NATURE OF DOCUMENTS AND TO MAKE SURE SAUDIS UNDERSTOOD FULLY WHAT THAT MEANT AND THAT INTERESTED USG AGENCIES HAD NOT YET GIVEN APPROVAL. IN THIS IT IS BELIEVED THEY WERE SUCCESSFUL. IN ADDITION, THEIR

ARGUMENTS DID HAVE SOME IMPACT ON DR. EGGERS, SINCE HE DID SCALE DOWN PROPOSAL IN SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS WITH SAUDIS AND DID, VERBALLY, REFER TO CONCURRENT SHORT TERM PROJECTS. IN FACT, DOCUMENTS WHICH ULTIMATELY WERE SIGNED APPEAR TO BE MUCH MORE ACCEPTABLE, THAN ORIGINAL VERSIONS CONSTITUTING FULL APPROVAL. (THESE DOCUMENTS WILL BE TAKEN BACK TO WASHINGTON BY MR. ROSEN O/A JULY 14).

6. APART FROM THE IMMEDIATE ISSUE OF THE SCITECH PROPOSAL, FURTHER HANDLING OF WHICH WE PRESUME WILL TAKE PLACE IN WASHINGTON, THE ABOVE PARAGRAPHS CONTAIN SEVERAL LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE. IN THE FIRST PLACE IT IS OBVIOUS THAT TEAMS MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE WASHINGTON WITH DOCUMENTS TO BE SIGNED WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN CLEARED BY ALL APPROPRIATE U.S. AGENCIES AND THE EMBASSY. OF COURSE IT IS ACCEPTABLE, AND EVEN DESIRABLE, THAT DRAFTS BE INFORMALLY PRESENTED TO SAUDIS FOR COMMENT, PERHAPS EVEN CO-DRAFTED BY SAUDIS TO MAKE SURE BOTH SIDES ARE ON SAME TRACK. FINALLY, IT IS MANDATORY THAT TEAMS BRINGING WITH THEM ANY PAPERS REQUIRING SIGNATURE OR IMPLYING USG COMMITMENT SHOULD ENTER VIA JIDDA FOR BRIEFING OF AND BY THE AMBASSADOR, OR IN HIS ABSENCE THE CHARGE.
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